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ABSTRACT

The three main articles describing "sub-projects" of the European Home Study Council (EHSC) research project, "Two-Way Communication in Correspondence Education," are short versions of papers presented by researchers at the University of Lund, Sweden, at the EHSC spring 1979 workshop. "Postal Two-Way Communication in Correspondence Education" concentrates on three problems of the traditional mode: submission density, self-check tests to replace assignments for submission, and computer-assisted correspondence tutoring. These results are reported: no significant differences between the variables in the first two problems and higher starting and completion rates for computer-assisted courses. "Correspondence Education Combined with Systematic Telephone Tutoring" compares a group receiving telephone tutoring with a control group with these results: telephone tutoring is suited for foreign language study, study time is not affected, a students receiving tutoring showed increased interest and knowledge of the subject. "Correspondence Education Combined with Face-to-Face Meetings" presents results of studies of outcomes, two types of face-to-face tuition, and background variables in student choice of method. These preliminary results are cited: course completion and study time are positively affected, students feel teacher contact is an advantage, and little difference is seen between teacher-controlled teaching and the student-centered approach. (YLB)

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international council for correspondence education

ICCE NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER, 1979 VOLUME 9, NUMBER 1

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The three main articles of this issue describe experiments conducted within one of the major research projects on correspondence education. This project was initiated in 1972 by the European Home Study Council and funded by the Tercentinary Fund of the National Bank of Sweden. The three researchers engaged in the project have been working in the University of Lund, Sweden.

The project was named "Two-way communication in correspondence education", and was meant to shed some light on this neglected area of pedagogical research. Sub-projects were defined on "pure" postal communication as well as postal communication combined with telephone tutoring and face-to-face tuition. The three articles are pre-conference short versions of papers presented at the EHSC spring 1979 workshop in Malmö, Sweden, 8–10 May. The full versions will be printed in the journal *Epistolodidaktika*, which is published by the EHSC. The articles give brief accounts of each sub-project and discuss some of the results attained.

The project was planned in near connection with European correspondence schools, and the experiments were conducted by schools in several European countries. This imposed of course some practical problems on the research team, on the other hand the project was adopted by the participating schools and influenced their thoughts on communication aspects of their correspondence education systems. Therefore, I believe that this impact of the research project will perhaps prove to be almost as important as the results it will soon be able to show up in its final reports.

I told you in the December 1978 issue that you would not receive any more issues edited by me. However, the President asked me to prepare just one more. I apologize for the time it has taken.

Now I remember that Rune, John and Agneta were the first authors to promise articles when I took over the Newsletter in 1975. I think it is appropriate that I don't leave the chair before they have fulfilled their promise. The new editor has just been appointed – please look at page 22 if you want to know who she is.

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MAY 1 1980

POSTAL TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION IN CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION

John A. Bååth,
Sweden.

General outline of the research project "Two-way communication in correspondence education"

When the main direction of the project was discussed in 1972 it appeared that, until then, almost no research had been devoted to the two-way communication element in correspondence education. Therefore, the research team supported by the EHSC decided to concentrate its efforts on the following modes of two-way communication between students and tutors or teachers in correspondence education, each mode defining the theme of one of the three sub-projects:

- postal two-way communication
- correspondence education combined with systematic telephone tutoring
- correspondence education combined with face-to-face meetings.

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Sub-project 1: Previous studies

Thus, sub-project 1 concentrates on postal contacts – the traditional way of communicating in correspondence education.

In one study within this sub-project, members of the two European correspondence school organizations EHSC and CEC, along with the Open University, were sent *a questionnaire on topics mainly related to problems concerning postal two-way communication* in correspondence education (BÅÅTH, 1976). Among the findings the following may be mentioned:

- An impressive majority of the responding schools expressed their belief in the importance of the assignments for submission and the postal student-tutor dialogue induced by the assignments.
- Nevertheless, correspondence schools apparently tend to reduce the frequency of the postal contacts by making study units more extensive or – in other words – by lowering the "submission density" (BÅÅTH, 1975).
- In spite of this, a considerable number of the schools did not think that "self-check tests" (or the like) could be used to any considerable extent to replace assignments for submission.
- A majority of the schools were hesitant or negative to multiple-choice questions used in assignments for submission.

Another study with reference to sub-project 1 was focused on *the role of the correspondence tutor* (BÅÅTH & WÅNGDAHL, 1976). The authors hypothesized that, in general, the tutor's most important function would be to further the motivation of his students. This would apply to courses where the tutor's comments are mediated by a computer as well as to courses with traditional correspondence tuition.

A review of the correspondence education literature on the topic in question supported this assumption. The views of prominent correspondence educators on the importance of the motivational function were summarized like this:

"A good correspondence tutor

- imagines what the students need
- inspires his students
- encourages them
- likes people
- is alive!" (ibidem, p. 20)

However, a number of current practices among correspondence schools seem to be inconsistent with this high valuing of the student-tutor dialogue. Among these current practices, the previously discussed length of study units may be mentioned.

Sub-project 1: Main themes of the experimental studies

The major part of sub-project 1 is experimentally designed. One of the main issues concerns (A) the *"submission density"* (length of study units). The problem can, simplified, be worded like this: Does it make any difference if we increase or decrease the number of submissions in a course? In other words: Is the number of pre-planned mail contacts in relation to the extent of the course of any importance?

Another main problem is related to the previously mentioned (B) *"self-check tests"*. What importance has the amount of assignment questions intended for two-way communication? Would it be possible to replace a substantial number of assignment questions by "self-check tests" without any detrimental effects?

The third main problem, chosen to be studied experimentally, concerns (C) *computer-assisted correspondence tutoring* (BÅÅTH & MÅNSSON, 1977). Could a system using multiple-choice questions, computer-processing of the students' answers, and computer-printed tutorial comment letters work as well as – or even better than – the traditional two-way communication induced by the traditional kinds of assignment questions?

Experimental designs

The basic design of the experiments, *type A* ("submission density"), is shown in this example:

	Submissions		Assignment questions per submission		Total
Group 1	2	x	48	=	96
Group 2	4	x	24	=	96
Group 3	8	x	12	=	96

Thus, the submission density is systematically varied. In one and the same course, the students of one experimental group get only 2 submissions, whereas in a second group the students get 4, and in a third group 8 submissions. However, the total amount of assignment questions is kept constant. (In fact, the assignment questions are identical in all three versions.)

The students of four courses (two of which given in two different versions each) were distributed at random into three experimental groups. When starting the studies, they obtained an enrolment questionnaire. After completing the course, they were sent another questionnaire asking about attitudes to various aspects of the studies. Non-completing students received a similar questionnaire.

Not only attitudes were used as outcome variables, but also *start, completion, study time* and *results on a final test*. "Start" was defined as having sent in at least one assignment for submission. "Completers" were those students who

had sent in all assignments for submission. One study time variable was "gross time" = weeks from the material was sent out till the student had completed the course. The other was "net time" = study hours recorded by the student himself.

All study material was sent to the students on application.

The following example shows the basic design of the experiments, *type B* ("self-check tests"):

	Sumbissions		Questions per sub-mission		Total amount of assignment questions	Extra "self-check test" questions
Group 1	8	x	12	=	96	(–)
Group 2	8	x	6	=	48	(+ 48)
Group 3	4	x	12	=	48	(+ 48)
Group 4	4	x	6	=	24	(+ 72)

Here, the total number of assignment questions is varied as well as the number of submissions. The overall amount of work given to the students of each experiment group is, however, kept constant by means of the extra self-check exercises (identical with the omitted assignment questions). This design makes it possible to study, among other things, the effects of replacing assignment questions by "self-check test" questions.

The students of two courses were distributed at random into the four experimental groups. Data were collected as in the experiments, type A.

Two of the courses used in the experiments, type A were arranged in two different versions – one with multiple-choice questions and computer-assisted tutoring and the other with traditional assignment questions and traditional correspondence tutoring. Thereby it was possible to design experiments, *type C*, in order to compare the two modes of two-way communication:

Group 1 2 3	Computer-assisted two-way communication
Group 4 5 6	Traditional two-way communication

Data were collected as in the experiments, type A.

Courses

Six one-subject courses were used – four of them given in Sweden, the fifth in Norway, and the sixth in Great Britain. See the table!

Courses	Experiment type		
	A	B	C
English (YES 1, Sweden)	x		x
Psychology (Allmän psykologi, Sweden)	x		x
Physics (Grundkurs i fysik, Sweden)	x		
Psychology (Arbetsledningens psykologi, Sweden)		x	
English (YES 1, Norway)		x	
Economics (Advanced Economics, Great Britain)	x		

YES 1, a basic comprehensive school course in English for adults, of moderate extent. Arranged in two versions: one computer-assisted and one traditional. (Exp., *type A and C*)

Allmän psykologi (Psychology, general course), an upper secondary school course in psychology, of moderate extent. Arranged in two versions like YES 1. (Exp., *type A and C*)

Grundkurs i fysik (Physics, elementary course) is a lower secondary school course for adults, of moderate extent. Computer-assisted tuition. (Exp., *type A*)

Arbetsledningens psykologi (Psychology of management) is a comparatively short, elementary course. Computer-assisted tuition. (Exp., *type B*)

YES 1, the same course as the Swedish YES 1 (translated into Norwegian). Computer-assisted tuition. (Exp., *type B.*)

Advanced Economics is a GCE "A" level course, somewhat more extensive than the previously mentioned courses. Traditional correspondence tutoring. (Exp., *type A.*)

Students

In *YES 1* (Sweden as well as Norway) no less than 2/3 of the students were above the age of 30 (about 1/3 even older than 40). Most of the students had a low formal education. Their motivation was mainly "knowledge-oriented", and – like the students of all the other courses – their strongest reason to choose correspondence education (rather than other study forms) was that it made it possible for them to study at their own rate.

In *Grundkurs i fysik* the students typically were about 30 years old, with a moderately good formal education. No less than half of them had taken at least one correspondence course previously. They were more "goal-oriented" than the students of the other courses.

In *Allmän psykologi* as many as 2/3 of the students were women, typically somewhat below the age of 30, with a moderately good previous education. Their motivation was clearly "knowledge-oriented".

Arbetsledningens psykologi had mainly male students (about 75 %) around the age of 30, the majority of them with a comparatively good previous education. Their motivation was slightly "goal-oriented", as well as "knowledge-oriented".

Advanced Economics was also found to be a typically "male" course (nearly 80 %). The students were comparatively young (85 % of them ⩽ 30 years old), and most of them had a fairly good formal education (GCE "O" level, 20 % even "A" level). Only few of them had taken a correspondence course previously. The students were decidedly "goal-oriented".

Preliminary results of the experiments

Type A: Submission density

One very clear experimental result was found in the type A series: in all of the six submission density experiments but one (YES 1, Swedish, traditional) significant differences were found as concerns *start – non-start*. Definitely more students in the groups with an increased number of submissions began their courses (= sent in their first assignment) than did the students in the other experimental groups.

No corresponding consistent differences were found with regard to course *completion*, nor to *final test results*.

In the two Swedish versions of YES 1, "high submission density students" (8 submissions) needed significantly longer *gross time* (in weeks) to complete their course than did students of the other groups (4 and 2 submissions). No differences could however be established between experimental groups as regards *net time* (= study hours).

The most interesting finding as concerns time variables is perhaps the *enormous individual variation* between the students (cf. BÅÅTH, 1975). For instance, in YES 1 (Norwegian version) one student completed his course within one week, while another student needed about two years. In the same course, the extremes regarding net time were 1 and 530 study hours, respectively!

On the whole, strikingly favourable *attitudes* towards various aspects of the studies were found, without significant differences between experimental groups. Just a few examples can be given in this summary: Out of the completers, nearly 90 % stated that *correspondence education* had been *a good way of studying* (50 % even a *very* good way), whereas only 3 % stated the reverse. The corresponding figures obtained from those non-completers who answered their questionnaire were 70 % (23 % a very good way) and 12 %. Nearly the same proportions were found in the answers to a series of questions on *the experienced value of the assignments for submission*.

Type B: Self-check tests replacing assignments for submission

With only one exception, *no significant differences* have hitherto been found between course versions with various amounts of assignment questions and self-check tests. The exception is that completing students of YES 1 (Norwegian version) with 12 questions per submission spent longer net time (= hours) on their course than students in the experimental groups with 6 questions per submission.

With regard to individual differences and attitudes, the findings were similar to those obtained in the type A experiments.

Type C: Computer-assisted correspondence tutoring versus the traditional form

The clearest experimental result in the type C series is that the computer-assisted course versions had significantly higher proportions of *starting* students than the traditional ones.

Also regarding course *completion*, the findings were in favour of the computer-assisted versions, with statistically significant differences in Allmän psykologi.

No differences were discovered as concerns *final test results*. The same applies to *net time*. With regard to *gross time*, it was found that students of the traditional Allmän psykologi version needed significantly more weeks to complete their course than students of the computer-assisted version.

In addition, a number of differences as regards *attitudes* were found. For instance, in both courses students of the *computer-assisted* (N.B.!) versions adopted a more favourable attitude to *the tutorial work* (comments, etc.) than did students of the traditional versions. Students of the computer-assisted YES 1 version were also definitely more in favour of *multiple-choice-questions* than students of the traditional version (in which no multiple-choice questions had been used!)

Further analyses

Among analyses which remain to be made within sub-project 1, the following can be mentioned:

- analyses of students with different values on background and initial motivation variables: Do they differ also with regard to outcome variables? Is the effect of the initial, individual difference perhaps greater than the effect of the experimental variables as to start, completion, final test results, study time, and attitudes? Do such individual differences interact with any of the experimental variables?
- relating the experimental results to the previously mentioned studies within sub-project 1 (BÅÅTH, 1976; BÅÅTH & WÄNGDAHL, 1976), to a recent theoretical study (BÅÅTH, 1978; soon to be published also in English: *Correspondence education in the light of a number of contemporary teaching models*), as well as to other relevant studies not only within but also outside the project Two-way communication in correspondence education.

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news & notes

National conference on Open Learning and Nontraditional Study

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln hosted the Sixth National Conference on Open Learning and Nontraditional Study in June, 1979. The conference was co-sponsored by the University of Mid-America and the National University Extension Association.

Fourth biennial forum of ASPESA

The Fourth Biennial Forum of the Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association was arranged in Perth, Western Australia, 19–23 August, 1979. The theme of the Forum was: "External studies: Ways ahead for education", and key speaker was Hilary Perraton, Co-director of the International Extension College, UK.

European Home Study Council workshops

The European Home Study Council arranged its spring workshop in Malmö, Sweden, May 8–10. The main theme was the research project "Two-way communication in correspondence education" (see the articles in this issue). The autumn workshop of EHSC is planned to take place in Rome, Italy, 15–17 October, 1979. The theme of the autumn workshop is:

"Models for the Planning of Correspondence Courses in the '80." Further information from: Giampaolo Bonani, ACCADEMIA, Via Englen, 25, Roma, Italy.

CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION COMBINED WITH SYSTEMATIC TELEPHONE TUTORING

Rune Flinck,
Sweden.

1. Introduction

The purpose of sub-project 2 was to shed some light on the effects of supplementary telephone tutoring in correspondence education. In sub-project 1 one of the main characteristics of correspondence education was studied – the two-way communication by means of assignments for submission. This form of communication suffers from delay. Direct, immediate feedback is impossible to obtain with this form of communication.

The other two sub-projects deal with the question how to initiate studies where some kind of direct contact between tutor and student is made possible. In sub-project 2 we decided to combine correspondence education with systematic telephone tutoring.

2. Design

The telephone has been used in different ways in education as an instructional aid, mostly to supply information from a teacher to a student or a group of students. Our way of using it we called telephone tutoring. The telephone was used as a supplement to a correspondence course. By telephone calls a tutor reinforced the two-way communication maintained by letters, and encouraged the student to participate in the instructional process. In this way opportunities were supplied for interaction.

In practice we adopted the following method. The student took a correspondence course which he studied in a conventional manner. When he had received a set of assignments for submission back from the school – corrected and commented on – a tutor and the student discussed various questions. No restrictions were imposed as to the content of the calls. The students was to receive a call in connection with each set of assignments. All calls exchanged were recorded and subjected to a content analysis.

Two different correspondence courses were used – one in Economics and one in French – both intended for adult beginners. The investigation included two parallel experiments, one for each course. Students participating in the separate experiments were divided at random into two groups, one experimental group and one control group. The only experimental variable was the telephone tutoring. Simplified, the experimental design can be described as follows.

Experimental design

E:	S + A ——— Tel ———	T
C:	S + A ———————	T

E = Experimental group

C = Control group

S + A = Correspondence course, i.e. study material and assignments for submission

Tel = Telephone tutoring

T = Test (final)

To collect data for our study we used the following instruments.

The *regular register of the school* gave us the results of the assignments for submission and the students' study time, calculated in terms of weeks. The *enrolment questionnaire* was designed especially for the research project and was the same for all three sub-projects. The questionnaire supplied us with background information about the students. The *final test* was designed by the school giving the course. *Post questionnaires* were given the students at the same time the students took the final tests. All *telephone calls* exchanged were recorded. They were a most important instrument for data collection.

As we expected drop-outs we also designed a *drop-out questionnaire,* which was sent to students who, after answering the enrolment questionnaire, had not been in touch with the school at any time during a period of 6 months.

3. Students

In the study 405 students out of 442 answered the enrolment questionnaire. This drop-out rate is about 9 per cent which corresponds to 37 students. Those students, called primary drop-outs, were excluded from further analyses. The 405 who answered the enrolment questionnaire were considered participants in the experiments – 223 of them studied Economics, 182 studied French.

From a scientific view it was interesting to find out if the experimental group – receiving telephone tutoring – and the control group within each of the two subject samples differed statistically in relation to the background variables. We could not prove that they did except for one case – the sex distribution of those studying French. It means that no possible differences – apart from the sex variable – in any analyses comparing experimental and control group within one sample could be assigned to differences between the groups as regards background variables.

As stated above we expected the occurrence of drop-out in the study. We knew that in adult education as well as in correspondence education the drop-out frequency is varying but mostly great. We have discussed if the great drop-out is real or only apparent without being able to give a definite answer.

In our study there were two types of drop-outs. We called one sub-group *Drop-out 1*. They were students who answered both the enrolment questionnaire and the drop-out questionnaire, but did not return all the sets of assignments for submission. Their share of the total number of students was 30 per cent in Economics and 23 per cent in French. We know why they did not complete the course, we know their attitudes to the studies and the way of studying, but we lack information about their achievements and their study time.

The second type of drop-outs we called *Drop-out 2*. They were students who answered the enrolment questionnaire but neither the post questionnaire nor the drop-out questionnaire, and who did not send in all sets of assignments for submission. Those students were real drop-outs from the point of view of our study. We did not know why they did not complete their studies within the period of time set up for the experiments (almost two years). They were more frequent among the students studying Economics (31 per cent) than among the students studying French (22 per cent).

Owing to the high drop-out frequency we had complete information from only about 43 per cent of the students enrolled. Of course a drop-out rate as high as that would affect our possibilities to draw general conclusions from the results of the investigation. However, neither type of drop-out seems to be systematic in relation to background data. We could not prove that the drop-out groups differed from the completers in their distributions over the background variables – but this does not mean that they were equal in this respect. Nevertheless, the result of the testing gives us a somewhat more reliable basis for careful generalizations when we discuss the findings of the investigation.

4. Results

Information was collected in order to answer certain questions and to test certain hypotheses. The questions concern the telephone conversation, and the answers were based on the results gained from the experimental groups in the two experiments. To test the hypotheses we utilized the experimental – control group method.

Three main questions concerning the telephone calls were raised. The first was: *How do students receiving telephone tutoring in connection with their assignments for submission respond to this form of instruction?* According to our results the students attitudes to the telephone tutoring were positive as a whole. The students found it easy to talk to their tutors and they did not feel embarrassed by the telephone calls. Rather the fact that someone was concerned about their progress stimulated them in their study work. Another aspect was to what extent the calls, according to the students, helped them in their work with the course material. In this respect we found differences between the two groups studying different subjects. The students studying French thought to a greater extent that they had been helped by the telephone calls than the students of Economics who took a more neutral attitude.

A second question raised was: *Do students receiving telephone tutoring discuss subject-related problems to the same extent when they study a general subject as when they study a foreign language?* We found that subject-related problems were discussed to a greater extent by the students of French than by the students of Economics. The content analysis of the telephone calls also indicated that in both subjects tutors and students above all discussed subject-related problems. We made the conclusion that the calls fulfilled an important educational function.

The third question raised was: *Do students receiving telephone tutoring discuss personal or social problems with their tutors during the telephone calls?* It is sometimes supposed that a correspondence student feels isolated in his work. If this is true the telephone might be a channel to break the isolation and to give the student an opportunity to discuss also personal or social problems. Depending on how we made the analysis of the calls we found that between 35 and 60 per cent of the students discussed personal or social problems with their tutor. We also found that calls containing a discussion of personal or social problems last longer than calls containing no such discussion. The question whether these results indicate feelings of isolation is open to discussion.

To sum up the students' reactions to the telephone tutoring we might state that their reactions were in general positive. According to the students the telephone tutoring fulfilled both motivational and instructional functions.

Further evidence of the positive experience of the students is given by the fact that a majority of them declared themselves willing to pay an extra fee to have access to telephone tutoring as a supplement to correspondence courses in the future.

Our second task was to test certain hypotheses concerning differences in achievement, in study time, and in attitudes to the studies and the way of studying between students receiving telephone tutoring and students not receiving it. For this purpose we used the experimental design and stated four hypotheses.

The first hypothesis concerned the students achievements and was formulated: *Students receiving telephone tutoring differ as to achievements from those who receive no telephone tutoring.* When testing this hypothesis we found no differences in achievement between the experimental group and the control group studying Economics. But we found differences between the groups that studied French. In that experiment students receiving telephone tutoring achieved better. The reason why we found differences in the one experiment but not in the other is hard to state. So far our conclusion was that telephone tutoring arranged as in these experiments was less suited for a subject belonging to the social sciences than for studies in a foreign language.

Our second hypothesis was: *Students receiving telephone tutoring differ as to study time from those who do not have the same opportunity.* We assumed that the telephone calls might improve not only knowledge but also motivation in such a way that the study time was reduced. But we found no

differences in study time between the experimental group and the control group in either of the two experiments. That means that in our experiments the introduction of telephone tutoring neither reduced nor extended the study time.

Our third hypothesis was formulated: *Students receiving telephone tutoring differ at the end of their studies from those who received no telephone tutoring as regards attitudes to studying and to the way of studying.* The analyses performed indicated that in both study courses the students who received telephone tutoring to a greater extent stated an increased interest in and knowledge of the subject than those who got no telephone tutoring. In no other questions about attitudes to the studies and the way of studying did we find differences between students receiving and not receiving telephone tutoring. These questions concerned various aspects of the study material and the assignments for submission.

Our fourth hypothesis was that *students receiving telephone tutoring differ from those who received no telephone tutoring as regards experience of isolation.* We could not prove any difference. The students' answers to the question formed a U-distribution, 53.8 per cent studying French (Economics 47.5 per cent) reporting that they had not felt isolated and 40.8 per cent (Economics 35.0) that they had. 5.4 per cent (Economics 17.5) held a neutral position. We were not able to give a definite answer to the question whether correspondence students, working alone, feel isolated or not.

5. Conclusion

As a result of our investigation we can establish that telephone tutoring was experienced positively. Mainly subject-related problems were treated but the students were also given an opportunity to discuss personal or social problems. This possibility may have contributed to the students feeling less isolated in their study work. We have also established that in our study telephone tutoring was of greater advantage to students studying a foreign language than to students studying a subject belonging to the social sciences.

(This report is based on: FLINCK, R. Correspondence Education Combined with Systematic Telephone Tutoring. Malmö: Hermods, 1978.)

CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION COMBINED WITH FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

Agneta Wångdahl,
Sweden.

1. The aim

Sub-projects 2 and 3 have one problem in common, how to arrange immediate feed-back through some kind of simultaneous personal contact. In the former sub-project, correspondence education was combined with systematic telephone tutoring to make immediate feed-back possible. In the latter correspondence education is combined with various types of face-to-face contact. Thus, a direct contact is arranged between students, as well as between the students and a teacher. Combinations of correspondence education and some kind of face-to-face contact are rather frequent up to now, however, the effects of this combination have hardly or not at all been investigated.

The main problem in sub-project 3 is to find out how the study outcomes of the correspondence students are affected by the possibility to establish face-to-face contacts with a teacher and fellow-students. The outcomes investigated include completion of the course, achievements, study time and attitudes to the studies and to the various study forms.

Another problem, which is also dealt with in the sub-project, concerns what type of face-to-face contact, or face-to-face tuition, that is best suited to be combined with correspondence education. The correspondence material in itself being, as a rule, well arranged from an instructional point of view, a passive teacher may very well be the answer. This would imply a student-centered educational situation. Nevertheless, a more traditional teacher-controlled educational situation may be preferable, so that the students feel at home and get their expectations based on previous experiences of school situations fulfilled.

A third problem investigated in this part of the project concerns some background variables and the reasons for studying. Is there any difference in this respect between the students who choose some kind of combined education and those who choose pure correspondence education?

2. Design and procedure of investigation

In order to find out how the study outcomes of the correspondence students are affected by their opportunity of face-to-face tuition, a comparable group is requested which does not have this opportunity but is otherwise as similar as possible. Thus, for each group participating in correspondence education plus some kind of face-to-face tuition, there is a comparable group, in which the students study by pure correspondence education.

In the discussion pro and con correspondence education combined with different types of face-to-face education, henceforth named *combined education*, the argument is sometimes stated that combined education is more

essential in some subjects, for example in laboratory subjects, than in others. To be able to investigate this point we have included three subject areas: Mathematics and natural sciences, foreign languages and social sciences.

To avoid the possibility that specific conditions at one particular school could affect the results, we have used several schools for the purpose of our investigation. At each school more than one subject area is represented. The schools are situated in Norway and Sweden.

Owing to economic and practical circumstances we could not distribute the students at random over combined education and pure correspondence education. Consequently, existing groups in combined education had to be chosen for the investigation.

In one part of this sub-project we attempt to find out which type of face-to-face tuition works most satisfactorily in combination with correspondence education. Two types are compared, one implying "teacher – controlled teaching" the other being more studentcentered. Accordingly, in this part we study two combined groups and one group of pure correspondence students within each subject area.

As in sub-projects 1 and 2, most of the data are collected by means of questionnaires. At the beginning of the course the students received an *enrolment questionnaire,* worked out in such a way that it applies to all three sub-projects. This questionnaire supplies us with background information, such as sex, age, marital status, study situation, occupation, educational level as well as earlier experience of correspondence education and combined education. Besides, it informs us about the students' motives for studying and for their choice of study form.

At the end of the course the students obtained a *final questionnaire,* and in some cases, a final test. The final questionnaire, which is more specific for each sub-project, provides information about (among other things) attitudes to study form, course material, subject and the types of teachers with whom the students have been in contact. Furthermore, it deals with problems which turned up during the course and possible solutions of such problems.

Students who had not been in touch with the school at any time during a period of six months were given a *drop-out questionnaire.* The aim of this questionnaire is first of all to find out (1) how far the student has advanced in the course, (2) if he has, in fact, discontinued his studies, and (3) if so, what caused the drop-out. In addition it is used to collect some of the information that the final questionnaire supplies us with.

Students who did not return the enrolment questionnaire received a *non-answerer questionnaire.* This is very brief and asks for some background variables, the motives for studying and why the enrolment questionnaire was not returned. These answers were to be given anonymously.

For the teachers participating in the part of the sub-project where various types of face-to-face tuition are compared, check-lists were compiled. These check-lists are composed of ten statements about how the tuition time has

been used. The content of the statements is based on the specific instruction and information given to the teacher at the beginning of the course. After each tuition session the teachers filled in a check-list. This also served as a "self-check", telling them the extent to which they followed the instructions.

3. Study courses

Eight courses are included in sub-project 3 – in mathematics and related subjects: one in Commercial Science and one in Mathematics; in social sciences: one in Hygiene and Nutrition and two in Economics. Most of them are at an upper secondary level, only two of them – one in Mathematics and one in Economics – being at a primary and lower secondary level.

4. Students

1532 enrolment questionnaires were distributed and 1316 were returned, which means a reply rate of nearly 86 per cent. Out of the students not answering the enrolment questionnaire slightly more than 20 per cent returned the non-answerer questionnaire.

A description of the 1316 students who returned the enrolment questionnaire shows that most of them are women, 56 per cent. This is a fairly high percentage, but it can perhaps be explained by the fact that the students in the Hygiene and Nutrition course are almost exclusively women (no less than 90 per cent). A high proportion of the students are 21–30 years old (45 per cent) while 25 per cent belong to the age group 31–40 years. Only 6,4 per cent are above the age of 50. About half the students, 55 per cent, work full-time away from home, fully 21 per cent work at home, and fully 11 per cent work part time away from home. Hardly 10 per cent study full time.

The occupational status of the students is classified according to four occupational categories applying to all three sub-projects. Out of the 1316 participants 13 per cent work with written symbols, 30 per cent work with spoken word, 25 per cent have occupational functions which are mainly manual and 32 per cent have other functions, being students, retired persons, soldiers a.s.o.

24 per cent of the students have only an elementary education, 34 per cent have attended a comprehensive school, 15 per cent have an upper secondary education, 21 per cent have attended a vocational school and fully 3 per cent have a university degree. 40 per cent have taken a correspondence course previously. This may seem to be a high percentage, but it can partly be explained by the Hygiene and Nutrition course. This is part of a large course where it is the second subject, and most of the students had previously studied the first subject. 16 per cent are taking two correspondence courses simultaneously.

An analysis of the students' reasons for studying implies that most of them are learning-oriented, i.e. they show a general interest in knowledge and in studying. There are also comparatively many students who are goal-oriented, i.e. they have a manifest purpose with their studies.

Comparing the background information about the students in combined education with the background information about students in correspondence educa-

tion we found that the students differ. On the average these differences are greater than the corresponding differences between subjects and between countries. The sex distribution is, however, rather similar. The age distribution shows greater differences. The students in combined education are on the average older than the students in pure correspondence education. 48 per cent of the correspondence students are 21–30 years old but only 39 per cent of the students in combined education belong to this age group. In the age group 31–40 years we found 22 per cent of the correspondence students and 27 per cent of the students in combined education. Only 8,4 per cent of the correspondence students and 12,4 per cent of the students in combined education are 41–50 years old.

More students in combined education are married, 49 per cent compared with 42 per cent of the correspondence students. As regards the study situation it appears that the students in combined education more often study full-time, more often work part-time away from home and less often work full-time away from home than correspondence students. The occupational status indicates that students in combined education work, to a less extent, with spoken word (19 per cent compared with 29 per cent of the correspondence students) and that they have more often a manual work (27 per cent versus 18 per cent for the correspondence students). The educational level is also different in the two study forms. More of the students in combined education have only an elementary education and fewer have attended an upper secondary school.

The reasons for studying do not differ in the groups, but as to the reasons for choosing a certain study form there is a difference. The students' most important reason to choose pure correspondence education are that they prefer to work alone and at their own rate. Such reasons as "there is no other possibility on account of work or geographical location" are not at all considered to be of the same importance. The definitely most important reason to choose combined education is that this study form offers the greatest possibility to fulfil the course. In connection with this clearly goal-oriented attitude, the distribution of the answers on the last question of the enrolment questionnaire can be mentioned. This question deals with how disappointed the student should be if he/she failed to fulfil the course. Out of the students in combined education 40 per cent state that they should be very disappointed and hardly 15 per cent that they should not be disappointed at all. The corresponding percentage for the correspondence students is 30 per cent, and 33 per cent respectively.

According to these data the students in the two study forms are rather different in some of the background variables. If it can be assumed that the face-to-face tuition gives the student additional support and motivation some of the group differences mentioned above are in the "correct direction". The somewhat older students with a lower previous education and greater unfamiliarity with written symbols and the spoken word choose combined education to a greater extent than pure correspondence education. If these data are generalizable should they influence the planning of correspondence education and combined education, or should they have no implications at all?

5. Preliminary results

Unfortunately there are no final results as yet, as the statistical analysis of the data has been delayed until recently. As a basis for a discussion, however, the following will probably be sufficient.

The final questionnaire covers several areas, and the answers given contain much information. In some of these areas no systematic differences have so far been discovered, neither between combined education and pure correspondence education, nor between the different courses. Such areas are e.g. interest in the subject, knowledge of the subject and attitudes towards the course material and the assignment for submission. This fact, which appears remarkable in itself and worth discussing, will not be further commented on in this summary. Only facts particular to sub-project 3 will be dealt with in addition to those cases where differences between the student groups have been found.

The completion of the course and the study time are greatly affected by the students' possibility to combine correspondence education with face-to-face tuition. This is most obviously observed in the distribution of the returned final questionnaires, the definitely major part of which comes from students in combined education. The difference between the student groups is, however, less clear if the number of students who have received final marks is considered. This may be due to the fact that the data on final marks were collected directly from the schools some months later, which would then indicate either that more students in pure correspondence education had got time to finish the course by then or that students in pure correspondence education do not answer questionnaires to the same extent as students in combined education.

Slightly more than 22 per cent of the students who returned the final questionnaire declared that, during their studies, they had felt isolated in their study situation. As concerns the students who answered the dropout questionnaire, the corresponding share is 37 per cent. This can be compared with the distribution of answers to similar questions in other investigatons. Out of the students in pure correspondence education taking the Hygiene and Nutrition course no less than 70 per cent answered yes, which presumably depends on the practical exercises included in that course.

Nearly 69 per cent of the pure correspondence students who would like to participate in some kind of face-to-face tuition, stated that the greatest advantage of face-to-face tuition is the opportunity to get in contact with a teacher, while 30 per cent stated that the greatest advantage is to see fellow students. No such difference is noticed when the students give their opinions as to the value of suggested supports when problems arise during the studies. In this case fully 78 per cent think that having the opportunity to meet a teacher regularly is a good support, while 76 per cent regard as a good support to meet fellow students studying the same course. There is, however, a noticeable difference between the student groups. Those who have experienced face-to-face tuition regard the teacher and the fellow students as good support to a greater extent than those who have had no such experience. Among these

statements there is also one that brings up the possibility of regularly meeting a teacher alone at a fixed time, but only 44 per cent consider this to be a good support.

Some examples of the possible functions of face-to-face tuition will be mentioned, functions that are considered to be important by the students in combined education groups. The function considered most important is that the face-to-face tuition contributes to reduce the feeling of isolation: 89 per cent agree with this statement. Next (83 per cent) comes the opinion that face-to-face tuition makes the study work more pleasant and more stimulating. Of about the same importance is the circumstances that face-to-face tuition makes the course material easier to understand (82 per cent) and corrects misunderstandings (80,5 per cent agreeing). There are, however, fewer who state that face-to-face tuition contributes to increased interest in studying on the whole, or that it contributes to increased interest in the subject.

Finally, some attitudes to the two types of combined education will be presented which were investigated in one part of this sub-project. At the beginning of the course teachers in combined education receive as a rule some information from the correspondence school – e.g. in the form of manual – about what this special kind of education involves. Teachers participating in this investigation received, in addition, a written instruction from the researcher. This instruction was designed in two versions, with different parts emphasized. One group of teachers were told to control the tuition to a comparatively great extent: they were to do most of the planning themselves, which leads to "teacher-controlled teaching". This kind of tuition we called type I. Another group of teachers received an instruction emphasizing other parts and telling them to give the initiative to the students and try to activate them. This implies a more student-centered approach which we called type II.

From the check-lists filled in by the teachers after each tuition session one can see that, to a certain extent, the teachers experienced that they followed their instructions. For example, the type I teachers thought that the students had not been sufficiently prepared for the face-to-face sessions, that the students had been told what to study before next meeting, that the teachers had emphasized those parts of the course material that they themselves regarded as important, that they had examined the assignments corrected and commented on by the correspondence tutors, and that they had told the students what was to be treated at the following tuition session. The type I teachers also considered, to a higher degree than the type II teachers, that they had followed the instructions given.

Several items of the final questionnaire deal with problems related to the two types of tuition. Although the students were not informed about this part of the investigation, their answers to these items were expected to reveal their points of view.

Some results from the total group of students in combined education will be given. According to the answers 69 per cent feel like students in combined

education, 17 per cent like correspondence students and 11 per cent like students in traditional education. 40 per cent experience the teacher in the face-to-face tuition as their teacher, whereas only 5 per cent think of the correspondence tutor as their teacher and 22 per cent regard both of them as their teachers. 46 per cent think that they and their fellow students have been sufficiently prepared to participate actively in the discussions, 24 per cent disagree and 15 per cent state that discussions have not occurred to any large extent. According to 74 per cent students and teachers have planned the face-to-face tuition together, but only 42 per cent regard that as the best solution. 38 per cent think that the students themselves should plan the sessions, while 20 per cent are of the opinion that the teacher alone ought to be the planner. 41 per cent believe that the students really have had an influence on the face-to-face sessions, while 71 per cent think that the students would like to influence the tuition.

In most respects the differences between the type I and the type II students are not very great. There is, however, a tendency towards more students in type I groups feeling like students in traditional education and more students in type II groups feeling like correspondence students. Have the students in type I groups been more cared for by their face-to-face teachers and thus experienced the "teacher-controlled teaching" as traditional education? There are somewhat more type II students than type I students who regard the correspondence tutor as their teacher, whereas considerably more students in type I than in type II groups consider the face-to-face teacher to be their teacher. The fact that discussions do not occur is stated by more student in type I than in type II groups, with one exception, the Hygiene and Nutrition course, which – as mentioned before – has a number of practical exercises.

Only slight differences between the student groups do emerge concerning the planning of the tuition. Students in type I groups think, to a somewhat higher degree than students in type II groups, that the planning was mostly taken care of by the teacher. The same applies to the students' preferences in this respect. Slightly more students in type II than in type I groups consider that the students themselves should plan the tuition. The differences is somewhat larger concerning the students' opinions about their influence on the face-to-face tuition, more students in type II than in type I groups thinking that they have influenced the tuition. The wish to influence the tuition is, on the whole, equally common in both type I and type II groups.

How then do the students' reactions correspond to those of the teachers? What are the implications of these reactions as to the opinions of the advantages and the disadvantages of combined education and how it should be planned? The analysis of data in this sub-project is far from finished. The material so far presented can, however, inspire to discussion and to further investigations.

news & notes

ICCE appointments

The President of the ICCE, in consultation with the Executive has announced the following appointments:

Treasurer:	Mrs. Louise Singer, Technical Home Study Schools, 60 Brandon Avenue, Wayne, New Jersey 07470, USA.
Chairman, Programme Committee of XII World Conference:	Dr. John S. Daniel, Vice-President, Athabasca University, 14515–122 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5L 2W4, Canada.
Newsletter Editor:	Mrs. Janet Jenkins, International Extension College, 18 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 2HN, United Kingdom.

The Proceedings of the New Delhi Conference

Just before sending the Newsletter in print we received the 308 pp post-conference book, edited by *Robert B. Wentworth: Correspondence Education: dynamic and diversified. Vol. 2: The Proceedings with The Additional Papers.* Eleventh World Conference, Askoka Hotel, New Delhi, India, 8–15 November, 1978. The Volume is printed in England, by H. Johnstone & Co, London 1979. The price for ICCE members is £ 6.30 by surface post, £ 9.30 by air-mail post. For non-members: £ 7.00 and £ 10.00, respectively. Order from: David M. Young, The Rapid Results College, Tuition House, London SW19 4 DS, England.

Pharmacy or medical course by correspondence?

Mr. Isaac A. O. Oveh from Niguria has written to say that he is interested in doing a pharmacy or medical doctor's course or any of the African herbal courses by correspondence and wants to know if any distance institute offers such a course. Information may be sent to Mr. Isaac A. O. Oveh, 8 Ekehuan Road, Benin City, Bendel State, Nigeria.

AAEA Newsletter resumed

The African Adult Education Association has resumed its Newsletter. Issue No. 1 of the new series came out in November 1978. It reported on various pledges for support of AAEA programmes and plans for mergers between AAEA, AFROLIT and ACEA (Association of Correspondence Educators of Africa). The Newsletter, edited by the Secretariat Staff of AAEA, may be obtained from The African Adult Education Association, Kenyatta Conference Centre, P.O. Box 30746, Nairobi, Kenya.

(*Adult Education Information Notes,* 1/1979)

books

Correspondence Education in India

Bakhshish Singh. The National Council for Correspondence Education, India, 1978.

The members of ICCE, and educators, administrators and government officials beyond the council, will find this short book by the new President of ICCE of great interest. It is also an important work for India and the world. In a number of respects the monograph has a significance like that of Professor Van der Walt's classic report in 1945, *Report on the System of External Studies in the University of South Africa.*

Bakhshish Singh's monograph is well written, literate without jargon. In 1961 this reviewer was associated with Dr. Ram Behari of the University of Delhi, and acquainted with his leadership in initiating correspondence courses there. Singh provides a comprehensive historical summary of events and development since that beginning.

The chapters on academic standards and instructional methodologies reflect the author's wide experience in the development of correspondence courses in India, and provide insights derived from a close analysis of problems. Singh's assessment of the present situation is complete and authoritative. The final chapter of "suggestions" is bold, courageous and innovative.

Singh's monograph deserves careful reading throughout the educational world. Educators in developing countries may find the monograph useful as a guide in the development of correspondence courses, and those in more developed countries will find there a record of sustained commitment to the democratization of education of which they in their countries might be proud.

Correspondence Education in India marks the emergence of new leadership – Indian leadership – in the development of correspondence courses on a national basis.

Charles A. Wedemeyer

Note: The monograph is priced $ 4 (£ 2) and copies are available for sale with Prof. Bakhshish Singh, President, National Council for Correspondence Education, Punjabi University, Patiala – 147002, India.

IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES OF ICCE are –

- ★ to promote knowledge and improvement of correspondence education throughout the world.
- ★ to foster good fellowship and better understanding among correspondence educators of all nations.
- ★ to exchange information respecting the growth and organisation of correspondence education.
- ★ to hold conferences for persons from all countries for the discussion of correspondence education.
- ★ to develop and strengthen regional and national associations of correspondence educators.

CONFERENCES HELD BY ICCE

1938 Victoria, BC, Canada	1953 University Park, Pa, USA	1965 Stockholm, Sweden	1975 Brighton, UK
1948 Lincoln, Nebraska, USA	1957 Banff, Alberta, Canada	1969 Paris, France	1978 New Delhi, India
1960 Christchurch, New Zealand	1961 Gearhart, Oregon, USA	1972 Warrenton, Virginia, USA	

The officers of the ICCE-

as elected in New Delhi in November, 1978.
(Further staff will be appointed.)

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